## Abstract of the Disclosure

A method and apparatus for fast and reliable fencing of resources such as shared disks on a networked system. For each new configuration of nodes and resources on the system, a membership program module generates a new membership list and, based upon that, a new epoch number uniquely identifying the membership correlated with the time that it exists. A control key based upon the epoch number is generated, and is stored at each resource controller and node on the system. If a node is identified as failed, it is removed from the membership list, and a new epoch number and control key are generated. When a node sends an access request to a resource, the resource controller compares its locally stored control key with the control key stored at the node (which is transmitted with the access request). The access request is executed only if the two keys match. The membership list is revised based upon a node's determination (by some predetermined criterion or criteria, such as slow response time) of the failure of a resource, and is carried out independently of any action (either hardware or software) of the failed resource.